WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image processing system for processing an input image containing an object image of a predetermined pattern which may have been magnified,

said image processing system comprising:

one or more characteristic quantity computing means for computing a characteristic quantity representative of a characteristic of an object image possibly contained in an input image; and

a plurality of magnification estimating means for computing a magnification on the basis of one or more characteristic quantities computed by and output from said one or more characteristic quantity computing means.

2. The image processing system according to claim 1, wherein

said plurality of magnification estimating means computes said magnification in consideration of an error or errors of one or more characteristic quantities computed by said one or more characteristic quantity computing means.

3. The image processing system according to claim 1, further comprising:

judging means for judging whether or not said object image is present in said input image, from said plurality of magnification levels estimated by said plurality of

magnification estimating means.

4. The image processing system according to claim 3, wherein said judging means synthetically judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image in consideration with an error or errors of magnification levels estimated by said plurality of magnification estimating means.

5. The image processing system according to claim 3, wherein said judging means judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image, from one or more characteristic quantities computed by said one or more characteristic quantity computing means and a plurality of magnification levels estimated by said plurality of magnification estimating means.

6. The image processing system according to claim 3, wherein said judging means judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image, from one or more characteristic quantities computed by said one or more characteristic quantity computing means and an error or errors of a plurality of magnification levels estimated by said plurality of magnification estimating means.

7. The image processing apparatus according to claim 1,

further comprising:

specific color extracting means for extracting a specific color from said input image, said specific color extracting means being located at the pre-stage of said characteristic quantity computing means.

8. The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

resolution converting means for converting a resolution of said input image into another resolution, said resolution converting means being located at the pre-stage of said characteristic quantity computing means.

9. The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

window processing means for sequentially cutting predetermined image areas out of said input image, said window processing means being located at the pre-stage of said characteristic quantity computing means.

10. A method of processing an input image containing an object image of a predetermined pattern which may have been magnified,

said image processing system comprising the steps of:

computing means for computing one or more characteristic

quantities representative of a characteristic of an object image possibly contained in an input image; and

estimating a magnification on the basis of one or more characteristic quantities computed by said characteristic quantity computing step.

11. The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein

said magnification estimating step computes said magnification in consideration of an error or errors of one or more characteristic quantities computed by said characteristic quantity computing step.

12. The image processing method according to claim 10, further comprising a step of:

judging whether or not said object image is present in said input image, from said plurality of magnification levels estimated by said magnification estimating process.

13. The image processing method according to claim 12, wherein

said judging step synthetically judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image, in consideration of an error or errors of a plurality of magnification levels estimated by said magnification

estimating step.

14. The image processing method according to claim 12, wherein

said judging step judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image, from one or more characteristic quantities computed by said characteristic quantity computing step and a plurality of magnification levels estimated by said magnification estimating step.

15. The image processing method according to claim 12, wherein

said judging step synthetically judges whether or not said object image is present in said input image, in consideration of one or more characteristic quantities computed by said characteristic quantity computing step and a plurality of magnification levels estimated by said magnification estimating step.

16. The image processing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

a step for extracting a specific color from said input image, said specific color extracting step being performed before said characteristic quantity computing step is performed.

17. The image processing method according to any of claims 10 to 15, further comprising:

a resolution converting step for converting a resolution of said input image into another resolution, said resolution converting step being performed before said characteristic quantity computing step is performed.

18. The image processing method according to claim 10, further comprising:

a window processing step for sequentially cutting predetermined image areas out of said input image, said window processing step being performed before said characteristic quantity computing is performed.

19. An image forming apparatus comprising:

interface means for receiving an image which may have been magnified, from an external device;

image forming means for forming an image on the basis of the image data received by said interface means,

recognizing means for judging whether or not an object image is present in said input image; and

control means for controlling an overall of said image forming apparatus, when said recognizing means judges that said object image is contained in said image data received by

said interface means, said control means making said image data invalid; wherein

said recognizing means includes said image processing apparatus defined in claim 1.

20. The image forming apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said control means performs said image invalidating process such that said control means causes said image forming means to form an image on the basis of predetermined image data and the image data received by said interface means.

21. The image forming apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said control means performs said image invalidating process such that said control means inhibits the formation of said received image data.